

Tourism

The city of New Orleans is one of the premier tourist destination cities in the nation. It has developed as an outstanding convention locale, bringing national and international visitors into the downtown area on a year-round basis. The city and tourist industry offer all types of public transportation, such as city and tour buses, streetcars, shuttles, cabs, ferries, tour and casino boats, all of which are easily accessible and readily available. The international airport provides cabs and shuttles into the city proper.

The Vieux Carré, with its old world charm, antique shops, restaurants, and nightclubs is the hub of the tourist industry. It is bordered on the south by Canal Street, the mecca of downtown retail shopping; on the east by the tree-lined riverfront with its boats, boardwalk, shops, aquarium; on the north by the historic French Market and the Old U.S. Mint along Esplanade Avenue; and on the west by North Rampart Street, adjacent to Louis Armstrong Park. The streets in and around this area are crowded year round with business people and tourists who use all of the available transportation getting to and from work, hotels, motels, and various attractions. The city is crisscrossed with public and tourist transportation systems.

ACCESS

New Orleans is easily accessed by visitors. The city is a major transportation hub and the leading seaport in the United States. It is on the intracoastal waterway system and is a major trade link to Latin America and other regions of the world. Seaport facilities are connected to the rest of the country by the Mississippi River, six mainline railroads, three interstate highways, and an extensive roadway network. The New Orleans International Airport provides commercial air service to major U.S. cities and many foreign countries. Based upon 1990 U.S. census data, the city is within 500

miles of 15.6% of the U.S. population (approximately 39 million people).

TRANSPORTATION IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

The Algiers Ferry travels from the foot of Canal Street across the Mississippi River to the city of Algiers. This ferry is a car transport used primarily by business people who live in Algiers and work in New Orleans. There is no charge to pedestrians, and it is a pleasant opportunity to experience the Mississippi and get a commanding view of the both sides of the river. Many commercial boat tours, as well as casino paddle-wheelers, are available along the riverfront. The public bus system offered by the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) provides transportation to all parts of the city, from the Vieux Carré to City Park to the Audubon Zoo to Lake Ponchartrain. The St. Charles Avenue streetcar, one of the oldest in the nation, travels from Canal Street along St. Charles Avenue to Carrollton Avenue, passing the Garden District with its impressive homes, two universities, and the Audubon Zoo. The Vieux Carré Shuttle circulates broadly in and around the Canal Street business area and throughout the Vieux Carré stopping at many of the city's sites. The Riverfront Streetcar runs along the riverfront from the convention center to the Old U.S. Mint.

Maps and Brochures

Many publications are available to assist visitors in planning their activities. There is an array of pamphlets, brochures, and magazines available at the city's information office located on St. Anne Street in the Vieux Carré as well as at hotels, motels, and virtually all businesses. These provide tourists with information on what to see and where to go in the city. The magazine *Where* has excellent maps detailing transportation options and

highlighting the city's sites. Several guidebooks are available to introduce visitors to the African-American heritage of the city. Guidebooks and maps are available that showcase African-American contributions to the city's development. There is also a tourist and entertainment television channel that provides information about the streetcars and the city.

Jazz Information

Information on jazz-related activities, tours, and sites is available in several publications, such as the *Times Picayune's Lagniappe*, *Gambit*, *Offbeat*, *Afro News*, *Aware Magazine*, *Where Magazine*, *Data News*, *Louisiana Weekly*, *Arrive Magazine*, and radio announcements on WWOZ (the premier jazz radio station). These publications are readily available at newsstands, in most tourist shops, and in motel/hotel rooms. Jazz performance schedules are also available on various World Wide Web sites.

TOURS

Jazz Walking Tours

Several commercial tour groups offer packages that include stops at jazz sites. Because many of the existing jazz sites are scattered throughout the city, it is difficult to organize comprehensive walking tours. However, several prime jazz sites lie within walking distance of the Vieux Carré, making possible walking tours to musicians' homes, neighborhoods, or to theaters, publishing companies, or former dance halls. Brochures being developed by the New Orleans Jazz Commission should make walking tours more accessible to tourists.

Jazz Auto Tours

Self-guided tours, in the form of maps and brochures, have been published and are available to the public. Guided bus tours, such as those provided by the Louis Armstrong Foundation, offer additional opportunities for

visiting jazz sites. Other bus tours, while not focusing exclusively on jazz sites, include some jazz locations on their itineraries. Auto-tour maps being developed by the New Orleans Jazz Commission should make touring jazz sites in private vehicles easier.

JAZZ MUSIC

Music happens everywhere in the city. There are street-corner musicians, city-sponsored events, school concerts, the famous Bourbon street bars and saloons, and paddle-wheel cruises. Yet, most traditional jazz experts will confess that the city offers "real" jazz in but a few locations. The most publicized locations for traditional jazz are located in the Vieux Carré and the Marigny. There are also a number of smaller neighborhood establishments, however, that offer traditional jazz. These places are generally less ostentatious and more neighborly in atmosphere and are known by word of mouth.

Traditional jazz, which is frequently found in smaller, more remote venues, is advertised in the jazz publications mentioned above. Because most visitors to the city are unfamiliar with different areas, there is often a reluctance for them to venture beyond the established tourist area.

In the past many outdoor performances have been held by a variety of organizations that have facilities available to provide this type of organized activity. The Old U.S. Mint for example, offered a series of performances monthly on Saturday afternoons. The Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve's French Quarter unit has presented several jazz activities over the past several years. The New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park offered free Saturday afternoon jazz concerts in Armstrong Park during the summers of 1997 and 1998, and the city and the school systems have organized concerts and student participation opportunities. Further, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival has become an increasingly popular annual event.